

STAN HANSEN! and BRUISER BRODIE! double dropkick TENRYU! and TSURUTA! EMI MOTOKAWA! has a jewel of a match with YUMI FUKAWA! KOJI KANEMOTO! vs NANIWA! and other stuff I saw this week!

Howdy!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #43! I watched a whole bunch of wrestling this week, because, as we used to say down at the disco, ONCE you get STARTED~ it's HARD to STOP....

*****NEW JAPAN TV (5/31/97)

GLENN (Who wears a cobra snake for a necktie so who do you love?:)) sent me this baby in his never ending quest to rule it harder than any man ever has. The main stuff I was interested in was the Super J stuff but there was plenty more to love. Takaiwa vs Dr. Wagner Jr. was pretty solid I thought, as Dr. Wagner, who is like the twentieth best wrestler in EMLL and the second best wrestler in the room when he goes over to his brother's to shoot pool, actually worked pretty stiff and hit some nice spots and acquitted himself well with the Japanese style. I'm sure he wasn't quite ready for the Death Valley Drop that Takaiwa served up, but that's life in the big city.

Ohtani vs Nakajima was a real nothing match, as our boy Ohtani can't compete with True Fighting Spirit of Suck that permeates Hanzo Nakajima. El Samurai vs Tajiri was pretty neat as Tajiri hit even goofier rolling lucha moves than before. It was your basic good booking as Tajiri supplied the flash and Sammy supplied the match. Tajiri didn't get all stiff on him which was probably smart and El Samurai gave him a lot of room to work and show off his stuff before the inevitable ending. Did I mention that El Samurai gets WIN,PLACE, and SHOW in the MOST IMPROVED MASK category? Fell Huckin Yeah!

The Kojima/Nakanishi title defense against the two anonymous members of HI who weren't Koshinaka was a spirited little affair that was a lot better than it could have been. I'm crazy. Nakanishi is actually growing on me now. I'm crazy. Kojima was fun in a Gigilo Jimmy Del Ray kinda way. The Choshu-Mutoh vs Koshinaka-anonymous HI member who isn't Koshinaka showed that HEY! Riki! RETIRE ALREADY! And Mutoh plus Koshinaka is a waste of a good Koshinaka match. NOT GOOD. No. Not at all. The Hashimoto, Sasaki, Ah crap! Nishimura maybe? vs NWO Sting, Hiro Saito and Tenzan wasn't nearly as gut-wrenchingly horrible as it should have been. Hell, NWO Sting is better than the real Sting these days and he wouldn't no-sell a pile-driver and I bet he would put over the far superior Steve Regal like the real Sting should have that one time. He's actually not that bad by NJ Heavyweight standards. He can take a clotheline and do a bulldog with the best of them. Hiro Saito worked his ass off to make this watchable. Hash mailed it in, Tensan sucks, Sasaki sucks, yadda yadda yadda.

*****6/1 ALL JAPAN TV

Glenn (who walked fifteen miles through barbed-wire so who do you love?) sent me this in his neverending quest to rule it harder than any man ever has. HEY! Taue, Kawada vs Ace, Kobashi for the title was great! There hadn't been a really good match AJTV for a few tapes and it was good to see this baby. Taue was all spunky and active in a very stoic kinda way and that bodes well for the Triple Crown match but Ace steals the show here, hitting a large portion of his arsenal and some stuff that's not in his arsenal. Kobashi has now gone the longest that I remember without being a whiny crybaby in the ring and you gotta dig that. Kawada puts Kobashi on his neck a few times and it rules. The end was filled with... mmmmmmmmm... All Japan hotness. Kawada and Taue look the same way after losing the belt as they did after they had just won them. And that makes them the TRUE champs in my book. Whomp Ass Match.

The Misawa, Kobashi, Shiga vs Williams, Lacrosse, Slinger was, of course, not as good, as this was a showcase for Shiga to do some highflying. Of course, if you look at the line-up you can kinda tell how the match is gonna go. Doc still sucks now but to a lot lesser extent in this match. Jungle Jim LaCrosse was pretty impressive as he hit some midrange power moves and took it to the top a few times. Misawa and Kobashi wrestled like their tag partner was Shiga so they didn't exactly plunge headfirst into any Dangerous Backdrop Drivers just in case Doc might have a flashback to when he was great.

*****IWA RESTART 1/24/97 KORAKUN HALL from Samurai! TV.

MIKE (who lives in a house made of human skulls so who do you love?:) sent me this in his neverending quest to rule it harder than any man has before.:) I watched this after reading the Quebrada review- which everybody should read and re-read since its the most extensive coverage of Japanese wrestling on the internet- so I was looking forward to the Women's matches since Loreface said the Emi Motokawa match was a good one, but HOLD ON A MINUTE! What's going on here?!?! Emi Motokawa vs Yumi Fukawa is a bizarre classic- Yumi Fukawa, underpushed and slightly underachieving future star of AJW vs Emi Motokawa- who has never had an actually memorable match that I can think of and who wrestles for IWA for whatever reason, hook it up and it becomes a real match of lifetime redemption by the end. Emi has this spark in her eye halfway through this that says, "Hey, I can actually work if I get the hell out of IWA and stay out of the J'd undercards." Yumi says to herself halfway through this, "I'm so freakin fast and good that I can have a good match in a fuckin IWA undercard match- to hell with what they think in AJW." From that point, it is truly inspiring as Emi hits fast as hell counters to Yumi's fast as hell offense. Emi sells like a KING, Yumi fights her AJW urges and adds weight to every move by using a different psychology before and after hitting a sequence. They both get lost in the moment of wrestling bliss and forget that they are actually gonna be followed by a match featuring the Great Kabuki. This match is a pearl before swine. Get this tape and fast forward through the rest.

The rest is kinda oh I dunno. I'll go match by match.

-Tudor the Turtle vs Takeshi Sato- Tudor has a new getup. He's still not good. Sato is really green and shows some promise.

-Chikako Shiratori/Yoko Kosugi vs Bloody Phoenix/Miyuki Sogabe- Shiratori is more beautiful than words can express. Anyhoos, You can take match outta J'd, but you can't take the J'd outta the match. Actually better than it sounds but not good enough to want to see, other than Shiratori who is really beautiful and all. Sogabe still shows promise.

-Onyro vs Akinori Tsukioka- This was very okay. They only half-missed a lot of spots- so HEY! they looked different.:) These guys don't suck if they are really green.

-Ryuma Go vs Katsumi Hirano- OHHHH JESUS.

-Kabuki/Leatherface vs Daikokubo Benkei/Kishin Kawabata- HEYYYY! Benkei! Golly, does Leatherface suck.

-Kabuki/Keizo Matsuda/Keisuke Yamada vs Tahashi Ishikawa/Shigeo Okamura/Kishin Kawabata- I didn't realize that this was a six-man until the end. It was better than your average Bruise Bros snorefest- so I'm really saying absolutely nothing.

*****EMLL IN JAPAN- 2/2/97; 2/6/97.

PETE (who...AH! Who do you love?):) sent me this in his neverending quest to taunt me with cool tapes until I actually start sobbing like a broken man.:) GOLLY! This WHOMPED ASS in a big way. It's kinda skewed because it's all one fall matches and they sometimes try to fight their lucha instincts too much (HEY! If your in Japan, they probly seen a lot of Japanese wrestling so why not go straight Lucha? They probably don't see a lot of that.) It makes for cool wrestling since everybody's style is adjusted. Apollo Dantes looks good on this tape and especially in the Kendo/Jalisco vs Dantes/Felino match, as he gets to mix it up with Kendo (who is getting REAL annoying with his prematch ritual). Dantes does more wrestling and less Rudo posturing which is something that wish would follow him back to Mexico, because he's pretty good when he wants to be. Felino is very stylistically at home in Japan so he knew what to do in front of this crowd and Rayo De Jalisco stays on his hotstreak by trying to stay out of the way. The real fireworks kick in when the Lizmark/ Mr Niebla/ Shocker vs Black Warrior/ Rey Bucanero/ Pirata Morgan match kicks in as they all hit every highspot imaginable and some I hadn't imagined before. Morgan was feeling it in this match as wasn't afraid to take some bumps that he doesn't feel neccessary to take anymore. Mr Niebla gets a two handed submission from his king-sized goofball finisher. Black Warrior was a little quiet in this match, not doing a lot of really cool matwork as usual, but joining in on the highspot bonanza. Not a great wrestling match, but an AWESOME highlight reel. Super Astro/ Negro Casas vs El Hijo del Santo/ Bestia Savalge was really good. Super Delfin came out and gave some flowers to El Hijo del Santo. (I'm not sure if they are dating now. HAHAAHAHAHAHAHAHA! Oh gee...) Very old school and it stayed on the mat for a long period. Super Astro had his cooler-than-cool Gold mask on and he didn't do his "Super Astro match by numbers" which he is wont to do. Santo and Negro wrestled like they always do. The Black Warrior vs Mr Niebla match was really good I thought, but it was only nine minutes long. They tried to adjust their styles to make it New Japan Jr-style which looked a little forced since these two are so Lucha, so it was a different match than I had expected it would be. These two don't work stiff enough to pull off that style, but they are both so dang good that you don't mind these small criticisms that much. I wish this had gone longer, but at least Black Warrior got to use HIS cretin goofball submission move.:) Kendo/ Super Astro/ Lizmark vs Rey Bucanero/ Bestia Savalge/ Pirata Morgan was another spectacular highspot bonanza, though it

was a lot less of one because it didn't have Black Warrior, Shocker or Mr Niebla. At this point on the tape, I wanted to sit Kendo down and tell him to give it a rest already. Negro Casas vs El Hijo del Santo was like all the ones you've seen. I still haven't quite gotten tired of this match yet. YOU WANT THIS TAPE. TRUST ME.

*****Jd' ROOKIE SPECIAL

GLENN! This has the Judo girls on it and I think it's the same match I saw on the Samurai News Show! They're gonna be fun someday. Heck, they're kinda fun now. The other rookie match was... well. A Jd' rookie match. Then they have a Shiratori-Neftaly-Infernal- other folks matches. Infernal wears better pants so her big ole butt isn't quite as huge looking. This (the match) left no impression on me at all, which with Jd', can be a good thing sometimes. Bloody Phoenix vs Cooga was kinda good considering the august wrestlers involved. Phoenix is getting better and Cooga still has the cool mask. I dunno. None of this is really awful it's just not real good, so I can watch and not get irritated, but there is nothing to freak out over. The Estelle Moreno vs Jaguar Yokota match is a good example of this. It had some REALLY nice sequences in it, and no real horrible parts but I can't for a minute remember how it ended. I remember the great lucha sequences where Morena hits some nice hurricanranas and what have you, but it didn't quite make it over the top. The Bison Kimura vs Lioness Aska was better than I figured it would be. But I wouldn't want to see it again. Lots of tables and blood.

*****NEW JAPAN TV (6/7/97)

GLENN! This was the REALLY cool stuff from NJ on the latest stuff Glenn sent me. I'll go match by match.

-Choshu/Hirata/Sasaki vs NWO Sting/Tenzan/Hiro Saito- See Comments above because I think this may have been the same match but with Hirata superimposed.

-Liger vs Doc Dean- I still don't quite understand this and it gets weirder when you watch it. Doc Dean, who is a good wrestler in a Jerry Lynn kinda way, kicks out of the PHAT ASS running palmthrust AND the Ohtani-killer powerbomb?!?!? Shit. Liger booked it so I guess I can't complain. I wish he woulda roughed up Doc a little more because he kinda got off easy. Chavo got a worse beating from Liger in their match way back when.

-Jericho vs El Samurai- This Fuckin RUUUUUULED. Jericho hangs with the NJ bigboy and only blows a couple of major spots. I'm wondering if they both wanted to tumble off the top during the set-up for the Super Frankensteiner, but it looked great when they got back up there to actually hit it. Jericho RULES. EL SAMURAI REALLY RULES.

-Naniwa vs Kanemoto- THIS IS GREAT! Naniwa shows that he is becoming one of the best workers in the world as he hangs with the surliest bastard in wrestling right now, Koji Kanemoto. This is an old fashioned ass stomp as these two beat the crap out of each other. Koji is such a total dick in this- throwing Naniwa's mask into the audience, little knees to the head, out-and-out slapping him upside the head and Naniwa is so effective as the spunky face, hitting the fastest spinning DDT that I've ever seen. Kanemoto puts the boots to him as he gets him outside the ring, hits his cool suplexes in the ring and projects himself as such a force (something Otani

can't pull off yet) that everything that Naniwa does gets magnified so that by the end, you REALLY hate Kanemoto and you REALLY want Naniwa to break his leg up Koji's ass so they can have a three-legged race to the hospital. Liger studies Memphis wrestling and has found his Hot Stuff Eddie Gilbert in Koji Kanemoto and GOD! does he rule. YOU WANT ALLLLLLLLLL THIS. -Hashimoto/Yasuda vs Koshinaka/Goto- oh god.

*****BRUISER BRODY FOREVER Part III (Part 2)

(When we last left RASMUSSEN, he was trying to watch all the Bruiser Brodie video when the evil Playboy Phil forced him to look at hot waitresses from Thailand.)

-Bruiser Brody/Stan Hansen -vs- Jumbo Tsuruta/Genichiro Tenryu - 12-17-83 WELL! I think I've now seen the greatest tag team ever. That would be Bruiser Brodie and Stan Hansen in 1983. GarshDAMN is this match AWESOME. It's from back when Tenryu could work and Jumbo Tsuruta was awesome and they get demolished by Brodie and Hansen. There is no way to effectively describe how stiff and relentless Brodie and Hansen are in this match. They also hit a double dropkick to augment Brodie's perfect dropkick from earlier in the match. Stan Hansen IS JUST FREAKIN GREAT AND BRODIE IS JUST FREAKIN GREAT in this. My favorite part is when they are just beating the shit out of Tenryu and Tenryu tries to get away by jumping out of the ring. Hansen jumps off the apron throws Tenryu back into the ring and Brodie proceeds to continue beating the holy hell out of him. It REALLY doesn't get better than this.

Bruiser Brody -vs- Jimmy Snuka - 11-12-82

This was not really great. It basically sets up the Tsuruta run-in. Next week I'm gonna watch all the Tsuruta/Brodie matches. WOO-HOO!

NEXT WEEK: Pancrase! GRUPO REVOLUCION! Whatever else I can get a hold of!

NANIWA~!

Dean Rasmussen, Digging the Fukuoka double flying footstomp the MOST.